

What is claimed is:

1. A device for locking a steering column of a vehicle, comprising:

a force-loaded locking member;

a control device configured to adjust the locking member relative to the steering column between a locking position preventing rotation of the steering column and a release position allowing rotation of the steering column;

wherein the locking member is comprised of one or more clamping jaws having a substantially smooth friction surface without profile;

a substantially smooth counter friction surface without profile provided on the circumference of the steering column;

a force generator connected to the control device, wherein the force generator is configured to exert in a locking situation, where the locking member is in the locking position, a clamping force onto the locking member directed against the counter friction surface and is configured to turn off the clamping force in a release situation where the locking member is in the release position.

2. The device according to claim 1, wherein the locking member is subjected to a constant release force counteracting the clamping force and acting to push the friction surface away from the counter friction surface.

3. The device according to claim 1, wherein the locking member is comprised of a pair of the clamping jaws, wherein the counter friction surface of the steering column is arranged between the pair of the clamping jaws, and wherein the pair of the clamping jaws is subjected to a release force forcing the pair of the clamping jaws apart and to a clamping force forcing the pair of the clamping jaws toward one another.

4. The device according to claim 3, wherein a first one of the clamping jaws of the pair is connected to a stationary support provided at a side of the first clamping jaw facing away from the steering column and is a stationary jaw, while a second one of the clamping jaws of the pair is configured to be movable towards the stationary jaw by the force generator and is a moveable clamping jaw.

5. The device according to claim 3, wherein the locking member is a clamp having two legs and wherein the

pair of the clamping jaws is formed by the two legs of a clamp, wherein the clamp surrounds the steering column in the area of the counter friction surface.

6. The device according to claim 5, wherein the clamp has a hinge connecting the two legs to one another so as to be pivotable relative to one another.

7. The device according to claim 5, wherein the clamp has a bending point connecting the two legs to one another, wherein the bending point generates a release force which, in the release situation, forces the friction surfaces provided on the legs of the clamp away from the counter friction surface of the steering column.

8. The device according to claim 1, wherein the force generator comprises a guided wedge having at least one wedge surface, wherein the locking member has a single one of the clamping jaws provided with a flank or has two of the clamping jaws provided with a flank, respectively, wherein the wedge surface of the wedge is configured to be moved by the control device between an active position and an inactive position relative to the flank of the single clamping jaw or the flanks of the two clamping jaws.

9. The device according to claim 8, wherein the active position of the wedge is the locking position of the locking member and the inactive position of the wedge is the release position of the locking member.

10. The device according to claim 8, wherein the wedge is longitudinally guided between the inactive and active positions.

11. The device according to claim 10, wherein the longitudinal movement of the wedge is substantially parallel to an axis of the steering column.

12. The device according to claim 8, wherein the flank of the single clamping jaw has a counter wedge surface interacting with the wedge surface of the wedge.

13. The device according to claim 8, wherein the flanks of the two clamping jaws have a counter wedge surface, respectively interacting with the wedge surface of the wedge.

14. The device according to claim 8, wherein the wedge in the active position moves between the two clamping jaws,

forces the two clamping jaws away from one another to transfer the two clamping jaws into the release position of the locking member, and wherein in the inactive position the wedge releases the two clamping jaws so that the two clamping jaws are forced by the clamping force against the counter friction surface of the steering column and moved into the locking position of the locking member.

15. The device according to claim 8, comprising a drive for moving the wedge, wherein the drive comprises a threaded member provided in the wedge and a threaded receptacle receiving the threaded member, wherein drive further comprises a motor and wherein the motor rotates the threaded receptacle for insertion and retraction of the engaged threaded member to effect the longitudinal movement of the wedge, wherein the motor is connected to the control device and switched on and off by the control device.

16. The device according to claim 15, wherein the drive further comprises a gear wheel and wherein the threaded receptacle is arranged in a hub area of the gear wheel, and wherein the motor cooperates with the gear wheel.

17. The device according to claim 8, wherein the wedge, the motor, and the gear form a unit positioned so as to be axis-parallel to the steering column with regard to movement and axes of the unit.

18. The device according to claim 8, further comprising a drive with a motor and sensors arranged along a movement path of the wedge, wherein the sensors detect the active, inactive, or active and inactive positions of the wedge and indicate the active or inactive position of the wedge to the control device, and wherein the control device based on the active or inactive position activates or deactivates the motor.

19. The device according to claim 18, further comprising indicators connected to the control device and activated or deactivated by the control device based on the active or inactive position of the wedge.

20. The device according to claim 18, wherein the sensors are two Hall sensors cooperating with a permanent magnet movable together with the wedge.